Football fans in pre-referendum Scotland: folk devils, space and place.

Football Fans in Pre-Referendum Scotland: Folk Devils, Space and Place

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Abstract

This research explores contemporary Scottish football identities in the period between the re-opening of the Scottish parliament and the up-coming referendum vote on independence/separation[1]. Specifically it discusses some commonly expressed attitudes and opinions of a selection of football supporters from three of Scotland's professional clubs based in the country's two largest cities of Edinburgh and Glasgow. The research exposes the multi-layered nature of Scottish football identity revealing a growing disdain among some non-Old Firm fans for the Old Firm clubs of Rangers and Celtic. With the established Scottish Parliament providing a degree of political autonomy and the upcoming independence referendum looming, 'becoming a nation again' has precipitated Scotland's football fans seeking more positive expressions of identity in which to express themselves. This has resulted in 'sectarianism'[2] and the Old Firm increasingly becoming a common folk devil for football fans in twenty first century Scotland.

Key Words: Football, Folk Devil, Class, Sectarianism, Front, Distinction

Introduction

Sport is well-established as representing a powerful site for imbuing political and ideological values. Sport, national identity and nationhood have intersected in various ways in Scotland given the country's dual national status as a nation within the nation-state of the United Kingdom. This duality is illustrated in sporting terms, of course, when Scotland competes as a nation at the Commonwealth Games and as part of the United Kingdom at the Olympic Games. In the lead up to the announcement of the Scottish

referendum, the former Labour prime minister Gordon Brown used the London Olympics to reinforce the unionist position claiming that the Games had helped the United Kingdom become stronger (The Guardian 14 August 2012). This was in tune with the dominant media and political narratives constructed around the London Games as allegedly bringing the country (United Kingdom) together and eliciting a feel good factor in the nation-(state) (The Telegraph 19 August 2012). However, this contrasts with the position adopted in 1992 by the Scottish National Party's Jim Sillars who, in the aftermath of a poor election showing for his party, insinuated that, in Scotland, national sporting attachments do not parallel precisely with political nationalism. Branding sections of Scotland's electorate '90 minute patriots', (See Jarvie and Walker), Sillars implied that political nationalism was secondary to sporting (cultural) nationalism for many Scots. The political and cultural effects of the sport and nation relationship in Scotland are complex. In the year of the re-opening of the Scottish Parliament, Jarvie and Reid (1999) warned against conceiving Scottish national identity as a single, uniform concept, arguing that sport, 'should not be used as a fallacious guide to undifferentiated Scottishness but rather as a subtle reflection of social, cultural and political diversity' (p. 22). Bairner (2001) later agreed, explaining that his analysis revealed 'the extent to which sport reflects deep divisions in Scottish society' (p. 48). Echoing Jarvie and Reid (1999), he added there is no 'single, uniform Scottish identity that is influenced by sport and that, in turn, operates through sport either to promote nationalist demands or ··· weaken[s] the support for political independence' (p. 48).

While it is beyond the remit of this article to examine the extent to which sport promotes or weakens support for political independence/ separation, it does examine some key cultural and political relationships that have emerged and been challenged in Scottish football in the period between the re-opening of the Scottish Parliament and the upcoming referendum on separation/independence. It re-visits the self-identification of football fans in Scotland in the context of the Scottish government's recent implementation of the Offensive Behaviour at Football Act 2012 by considering more broadly the impact that the domestic (Scotland) demonization of sectarianism is having on fan identities. Exposing the

multi-layered nature of Scottish football identities, the article specifically reveals that increasing political autonomy in Scotland is matched by sectarianism emerging as the new sporting, cultural and political folk devil. Moreover, opposing sectarianism, and being seen oppose to it have become one of the most publicly visible and morally agreeable ways to demonstrate one's authenticity as a good Scottish football fan specifically and a good Scottish citizen more broadly. The paper also considers the extent to which Giulianotti's (1991) prediction was accurate. He stated:

> *Should Scotland gain greater political and economic autonomy from England ··· then the significant 'cultural dislike' of England will be less routinely reproduced than is currently the case. Given such a scenario, the net effect would be that the Scottish team [supporters] would be required to find a way of positively presenting themselves, rather than simply irradiating an ossified typology of Englishness, and negatively defining themselves against it (p. 522 original emphasis).*

The following account of fan identities forms part of a larger longitudinal study that has covered the period between 2004 and 2013. The research draws on interviews and participant observation conducted over this period with fans[3] of Partick Thistle (Glasgow), Heart of Midlothian (Edinburgh) and Hibernian (Edinburgh). Most of the interviews were individual semi-structured and some were group interviews consisting of between five and eight participants. A small number of interviews were unplanned, unstructured, opportunistic 'interview-as-talk' (Spradley 1979), like those commonly conducted in natural research environments. I attended various official supporter club functions, observed fans in their authentic match day settings including pubs, popular routes to and from the stadium and fan areas inside the stadium. Most of the fans interviewed were also fans of the Scotland national team and most of them were active attendees at Scotland matches. Whilst it is always problematic generalising too much with small samples, these views are the perspectives of existing fans of these clubs and therefore do represent some authentic fans' perceptions. It is the fans' interpretations rather than any objective truth that the research evidences. The major discussions selected for this paper were chosen precisely because they were popular opinions expressed and

shared by other fans among and across the respective clubs, allowing some corroborating evidence to exist. A range of ages and both male and female respondents were interviewed. Pseudonyms and ages are used when presenting each fan's words.

A number of studies have theorised football fandom both within Scotland and further afield (Moorhouse 1984; Bradley 1998, 2002, 2011; Finn and Giulianotti 1998; Giulianotti 2002, 2005; Heinonen 2002; Hay and Joel 2007; Williams 2007; Abell 2011; Dixon 2011). Dixon (2011) cites Williams (2007) and agrees that researchers need to move beyond 'simplistic dichotomies of fandom' which romanticise 'the traditional' and fail 'to position fans in the new social contexts of late modernity (Dixon, 2011: 280). The approach adopted here attempts specifically to compliment, the work of some of those contributors. such as Giulianotti (1991, 1995) Finn and Giulianotti (1998) and Bradly (2002, 2011), who have not merely romanticised or dichotomised fan culture in Scotland. It seeks to extend our knowledge by engaging with some of their theoretical insights and by contextualising and further substantiating them in the specific period between devolution and the referendum. Giulianotti (1991) and Finn and Giulianotti (1998) argue that during a period characterised by high profile hooliganism among England supporters, Scotland supporters sought to differentiate themselves from their English counterparts. Giulianotti (1991) showed how Scotland fans engaged in forms of impression management ' which could generate an enduring conscience collectif' (p. 509). He observed, 'this was achieved through the unanimous depiction of stereotypically English cultural properties, against which they could define themselves' (p. 509). Bradley (2002, 2011) also established that Scotland football fans distinguished their collective self from England and Englishness. The study found that Scotland fans exhibited degrees of anti-Englishness suggesting, however, that it did not easily translate beyond football, with significant numbers of Scotland fans retaining some sense of cultural and political Britishness. For many Scotland fans in Bradley's work, the anti-English sentiment represented a strategic symbolic distinguishing device intended to protect Scotland and the Scots from becoming subsumed or identified synonymously by foreigners as England/English or Britain/ British.

Bradley (1998, 2002, 2011) identified an additional significant element of identification among Scotland football fans[4], that is particularly pertinent to this research, namely an antipathy to public pronouncements or symbols of religion in football contexts. Many Scotland fans questioned in his studies agreed that a central unifying element of Scottishness (or support for Scotland at football at least) was secularism and/or outright opposition to religious identification. For them, religion appeared to be viewed as divisive to the extent that it should be absent from Scotland football gatherings in much the same way that within the Tartan Army, club allegiances should remain undisclosed (Kelly 2007a; Bradley 2011). Bradley states:

> *The unity experienced among Tartan Army fans is frequently expressed and framed in terms that invoke religion as oppositional and an unwelcome divisive element. As far as supporting Scotland is concerned, it is a significant standpoint among contemporary Tartan Army membership that religious identity, heritage or 'talk' is irrelevant and should not be introduced into conversations or Tartan Army relationships. The overwhelming dominant perspective is that like society itself, supporting Scotland should be built upon secular foundations (p. 822).*

Accompanying this apparent disdain for public expressions or discussions of religion in Scotland football supporter environments is the growing anti-'sectarian' industry (Flint and Kelly in press), characterised by sustained political, media and academic criticism of ethno-religious bigotry (sectarianism) alongside conflating these with political expression or opinion on the constitutional position of Northern Ireland. For example, Bradley (2002) also illustrated that, with Scotland football fans:

> *a significant degree of the comment recorded sought to marginalize the perceived para-political identities of supporters of some football clubs in Scotland by rendering Scottish identity as a 'neutral' attribute: one untainted by the negatives associated with Celtic and Glasgow Rangers in particular" (p.184).*

The discussion begins by presenting some of the key discussions raised by each group of fans. Beginning with Partick Thistle, and then the Edinburgh clubs, aspects of each club's self-identity are outlined. This includes looking at their relationships with Rangers and Celtic and the national team. The common theme across all three clubs - an aversion to sectarianism - is then discussed in detail with reference to the impression management work of Goffman (1959) and Bourdieu's (1984) work on accumulating capital in the pursuit of making 'gains in distinction'.

Partick Thistle

A common theme among all the clubs involved distancing themselves from (Irish-Catholic) Celtic and (Ulster-Protestant) Rangers. For Partick Thistle (PT) fans a central element of this distancing process involved discursively aligning themselves seamlessly with the Scotland team as though both of these positions symbiotically supported the other. It was implied that the travelling Scotland support (Tartan Army)[5] has an extraordinary high percentage of PT supporters relative to most other clubs . PT fans agreed that part of the enjoyment for Scotland supporters is that the international arena is free of club rivalries. One fan explains the club-free Scotland experience:

> I can only ever remember once seeing club colours and it was Partick Thistle ··· and I couldn't understand why he was wearing it. I mean you are not there to support your club. You are there to support your country. And for me he shouldn't have been wearing club colours in any form
> (Pat, 45yrs).

The following exchange from a PT fan reveals these themes further.

JK	You sometimes see club flags among England fans don't you?
Ellen (32, years)	Probably because in England they support their national team. I think if you turned up at a Scotland game with a Rangers or Celtic scarf you would get lynched.
JK	Or what about a Partick Thistle top or scarf?

Ellen (32, years) Ha, yeah we would get clapped and get a seat down the front. No I think everybody's there to support the national team and it doesn't matter what club you support, you are there to support the national team. There would be trouble if folk turned up with their club stuff. That's not why you are there.

Despite apparently being made in jest, these comments reveal two underlying elements running through most of the interviews across all clubs. First, by comparing England - where 'they support their national team' - Ellen insinuates that there are club supporters in Scotland who do not support the national team. Moreover, these supporters are explicitly revealed without prior prompting by exclusive reference to 'Celtic and Rangers scarf' wearers getting 'lynched'. In other words, Celtic and Rangers are framed as non-Scottish signifiers and resultantly they become viewed as oppositional to Scotland. Second, unlike the 'non-Scottish' Old Firm, PT are perceived as inherently Scottish.

There is a stated belief among all but one PT respondent that Rangers (and to a lesser extent, Celtic) used to have a far higher percentage of supporters attending Scotland matches than currently the case. Although some believed this to be partly related to instrumental reasons like the number of club players in the Scotland squad and availability of European football, the primary reason expressed was linked to sectarianism.

> I think it's more to do with the political and religious thing behind it. When you go to Parkhead and you wave your Irish flag and why then would you support Scotland? I mean you get it with Rangers supporters. Well if they sing Rule Britannia and God Save the Queen and fly Union Jacks and then next week are going to Hampden to support. I think it's just trying to reconcile club football with international football. It just doesn't add up. Whereas every other team in Scotland, well fine, ok maybe there's Hearts and Hibs but not to the same extent ··· And I just don't think that it stacks up (Ellen, 32 yrs).

This perception that Celtic and Rangers supporters have more difficulty 'reconciling club football with international football' was evident

throughout all of PT respondents' interviews.

Another central feature of PT fandom involved presenting themselves as distinct from Rangers and Celtic, specifically reinforcing their self-appointed label as 'fans of Glasgow's non-sectarian team'.

> It's part of the Glasgow thing ··· when people say 'what team do you support?' You just feel so good saying Partick Thistle cause you know you are not going to get any bother or anything. And then people will say to you 'but who do you really support?' And I say 'I really support Partick Thistle' (Fraser, 22 yrs).

This major feature of PT fans defining selves as 'not being' Rangers or Celtic was elucidated further by all the other respondents. Steve (37 yrs) adds, 'I think we are the great Glasgow alternative to Rangers or Celtic'. Pat (45 yrs) suggests that most PT fans 'will tell you that they are anti-sectarian'. Shona (46 yrs) also captures these sentiments admitting:

> I think a lot of it (PT identity) is wanting to shy away from the Old Firm and everything that is involved in that ··· I think of it as less a Thistle identity per se. I think it's more what we're not than what we are.

Other PT fans alluded to this also, with one boasting of 'rebelling against the Old Firm' because there 'is always this thing in Glasgow that is said ··· but who do you really support?' (Craig, 49 yrs). Although all PT fans expressed similar sentiments, one fan - a self-identified Protestant - explained his personal aversion to the sectarianism of the Old Firm by paying special attention to Rangers. When asked why he disliked Rangers so much (more than Celtic), he responded:

> Because I'm Protestant and because they (Rangers) are negative ··· I don't have a bigoted bone in my body but when I go to Ibrox I'm a Fenian bastard ··· I feel they are the most extreme out of the two. I just feel they are more bigoted than Celtic. I feel they expect me to support them (Dave, 44 yrs).

In addition to the anti-sectarian and often non-Old Firm identification among PT fans, there exists a subtle self-mocking and martyr-like habitus

attached to their self-identification. In response to questions about the PT fan identity, the following selection of comments capturing this theme were made:

> I mean it's torture that's all haha (Shona, 46 yrs).
>
> It's usually a really fun experience if you didn't have to watch what was on the park (Steve, 37 yrs).
>
> When I began going with my uncle I was going along to support them and that was me. I've suffered bravely for it (Tom, 52 yrs).

These remarks, albeit partly made in jest, demonstrate both an acceptance of being relatively unsuccessful - perhaps unglamorous - and a determination to maintain a front that involves self-mocking. It is these perceptions along with a quite self-consciously constructed anti-sectarian identity that combine to set PT as a club and support apart - in the eyes of these PT supporters - from their more successful Glasgow neighbours, Rangers and Celtic.

Heart of Midlothian (Hearts) and Hibernian (Hibs)

Most fans from both Hearts and Hibs expressed the belief that few Rangers or Celtic fans actively support Scotland, preferring to focus on their club fortunes instead. Many of them believe that Rangers fans used to make up as much as the majority of the Scotland support but that this has changed since the late 1980s. Heart and Hibs fans believed the majority of Scotland supporters, particularly the away contingent, are now made up primarily of non-Old Firm fans and, that disproportionately, a high percentage originate from Fife, the Borders, the east coast and the Aberdeen area. A couple of reasons emerged for these claims. First, there is a perception expressed by all respondents that provincial clubs have less opportunity to watch international standard players or travel abroad with their club for foreign trips so are more likely than Old Firm fans to follow Scotland. Second, it was felt that fans of the Old Firm clubs were not committed Scots, that they lacked the patriotism for Scotland that fans of other clubs had. This was linked to Rangers' and Celtic's ethno-religious identities connecting them to

Ulster and Ireland.

Despite a lingering perception in some quarters of Hibs and Hearts being a 'mini Old Firm' (Hognestad 1997; Kowalski, 2004) and despite there being evidence of ethno-religious aspects attached to their respective identities (Kelly 2007a; Kelly in press), supporters of both Hibs and Hearts appear to increasingly dislike (Irish-Catholic) Celtic and (Ulster-Protestant) Rangers in equal measure. Moreover, they both appear determined to present themselves as non-sectarian fans, shorn of previous sectarian signifiers (see Kelly 2007a, 2007b). For example, Hibs fan Jack (58 yrs) captures a common sentiment among fellow Hibs fans:

> We have that Irish connection and there's no doubt about it. They were seen, certainly in the early days, they were the Catholic club ….. Hibs are not seen as a Catholic club by Hibs fans. Religion doesn't come into it for Hibs.

A more emphatic rejection of 'sectarian' signifiers is expressed by Sarah (31yrs) who connects the Irish heritage more explicitly to political identifiers:

> We don't go in for all the plastic paddy stuff. Most Hibs fans see that as a Celtic thing and if asked I would say most of us are against that type of behaviour. Politics and sport should be kept separate.

Hearts fans expressed similar sentiments:

> Hearts and Hibs hate each other but there's not the same bitterness as the Old Firm and the rivalry is now much more about football. You'll get one or two I suppose on both sides. Hibs fans with their Irish tricolours and Hearts fans will stick up their union jacks but it will only be for a couple of games a season (Trevor, 41 yrs).
>
> Both Hearts and Hibs hate sectarianism. We see that as a Glasgow problem. At Hearts, I've not seen anything more provocative than a union jack. You get the occasional badges with the red hand of Ulster but to me that's more of a personal thing than a football thing. We want to avoid all that (Andy 19, yrs).

Although there is evidence of a strong geographical identification for the two Edinburgh football clubs at both a city and more localised level (see Kelly 2007a and Kelly in press) equally significant factors emerged in relation to their club identity and the notion of 'the other' and these inform our understanding of the nuances surrounding sporting identification in Scotland. The main two interlinked factors to transpire from the football clubs in terms of 'club identity' involved first, the supporters' expression of an identity which is situational and highly dependent upon the opposition and its perceived identity and, second, a common disdain towards the Old Firm. Therefore, Hibs supporters exaggerate their Irishness against the unionist 'others' of Rangers and Hearts, and exaggerate their Scottishness against the Irish 'other' Celtic, while Hearts supporters exaggerate their Scottishness against Rangers and their Britishness against Celtic.

While sections of the supporters attached to Hearts and Hibs indulge in 'managing a front' according to audience segregation (Goffman, 1959) - becoming more or less British-Protestant (Hearts) or Irish-Catholic (Hibs) depending upon the opposition - it appears that for both clubs a Scottish identity is emerging as the primary national identification among their respective supporters. This is not to deny that within the 'spaces of sport' (Bourdieu, 1984) occupied by Hibs and Hearts in their respective locations of Leith and Gorgie within Edinburgh, there are pockets of British Protestant-unionist supporters among Hearts and that for some Hibs fans, forms of Irishness or Catholicism remain. However, the apparent overriding concern for supporters of both clubs seems to be to distance themselves from the 'sectarian Old Firm' whilst reinforcing a Scottish identity.

A significant feature of a high number of interviews (particularly the unstructured ones) was the determination shown by Hibs and Hearts fans to emphasise that they are not sectarian. This was often evident in the respondents' body language, and facial response where they would often appear uncomfortable, suspicious and even defensive when first introducing (or being introduced to) questions relating to religion and Irish issues. This is possibly connected to the current anti-sectarian drive that has gathered momentum in the last ten years, with three summits, the Offensive Behaviour at Football Bill being implemented in 2012, and numerous high-

profile debates and discussions around sectarianism occurring. Being sectarian in Scotland continues to be viewed in media and political discourse as deviant and it continues to evoke controversy when discussed in football environments (Flint and Kelly, in press). This often resulted in a visible determination by respondents to explicitly oppose sectarianism.

Goffman's (1959) insights into impression management inform our understanding of supporter behaviour and interaction here. Goffman stressed that individuals and groups seek to present themselves in the best possible light by performing 'fronts'. These fronts become institutionalised because of wider societal expectations and norms. Hence the norm of eschewing sectarianism and being a 'good' football fan and citizen. Once a front becomes institutionalised collective representations arise and these become 'vocabulary of fronts' (Goffman, 1959, p. 36). In other words, almost all new social situations have pre-existing socially constructed patterns of expectations that prevent us from approaching every new situation anew as though we had no prior knowledge of expectations and responsibilities. These fans know the vocabulary of front to be spoken. Their responsibilities and expectations are to show that they are not sectarian. Goffman stressed:

He (sic) can place the situation in a broad category around which it is easy for him to mobilise his past experience and stereotypical thinking. Observers then need only be familiar with a small and hence manageable vocabulary of fronts, and know how to respond to them, in order to orient themselves in a wide variety of situations (p. 36).

Goffman explains that, 'while in the presence of others, the individual typically infuses his activity with signs which dramatically highlight and portray confirmatory facts that might otherwise remain unapparent or obscure' (p. 40). Thus, all respondents from all clubs were keen to emphasise their opposition to sectarianism and this often took the form of opposing Celtic and Rangers (clubs and fans) in the belief that they are the sectarian problem.

For example, the Hearts fans' views are illustrated by the following quotes which broadly represent popular views among Hearts fans:

there's more and more Hearts fans I would say now hate both of them just as much as the other (Jim 38 yrs).

Rangers and Celtic hate each other because of religion. Football is about competing for football, not about religion (Andrea 17 yrs).
They (Celtic) were singing IRA songs. It makes my blood boil. They are animals. Everywhere they go they sing their pro-Irish songs and their Irish soldier song and they cause so much destruction (Andy 19 yrs).

I find it annoying that they (Celtic) sing songs about joining the IRA when they were young. It's not just Celtic. Rangers and the whole of their end singing no surrender, the sash and build my gallows or whatever it is they sing (Trevor 41 yrs).

Similarly, the Hibs fans' views are illustrated in the following quotes which broadly represent the popular views among them:

They are the bigot brothers I'm afraid. They have spoilt Scottish football and are an embarrassment to Scottish society (Allan 27 yrs).
Whether you go to Parkhead or Ibrox, they start up their battle hymns and we're not talking about a small minority. You're not talking about small minorities here (Jack 58 yrs).

Such is the antipathy shown towards the Old Firm, that some Hearts and Hibs fans display an intra-city camaraderie preferring their major city rival (each other) to beat either of the Old Firm clubs when their rival plays one of the big Glasgow teams.

Common themes emerged among all three clubs and, upon closer scrutiny, reveal that even when it appears that fans were being similarly critical of the Old Firm, the criticisms of those fans of Hibs and Hearts sometimes contrasted subtly with PT fans. The Edinburgh clubs' fans exhibited a broader antipathy towards the city of Glasgow. Given PT are based in Glasgow, one would not expect this from PT fans. However, much of this antipathy is ground in notions of class status. For example, Hibs and Hearts fans presented Edinburgh as the more 'distinct' city in class terms. Phrases like 'soap dodgers' and 'slum dwellers[6] are commonly utilised by

Edinburgh clubs against their Glasgow counterparts in carving out the (perceived) class distinctions between the cities. In discussing this antipathy for Glasgow, the Edinburgh clubs' respondents' comments were characterised by the following:

> I'm not keen on Glasgow (Fred 66 yrs)
>
> I've no time for the city or its people (John 41 yrs).
>
> I think Glasgow is rough and full of buckfast drinking neds (Sarah 31 yrs)

It is difficult to judge the extent to which these comments are merely discursive framing of city (or football) rivals or indeed illustrative of something more meaningful but they were the only major difference between the views expressed by Partick Thistle and the Edinburgh clubs.

Fans from Partick Thistle, Hearts and Hibs did clearly share a common disdain for both Old Firm clubs, Celtic and Rangers and this appears to be increasing in the current climate of the acceleration of the anti-sectarian industry. At club level there is evidence of fans achieving 'gains in distinction' (Bourdieu, 1984) by 'not being' the Old Firm. These non-Old Firm fans attempt to accumulate 'gains in distinction' by eschewing any association to the disdainfully viewed 'sectarian' identifiers associated with a number of constructed 'others'. Bourdieu showed how people seek to make 'gains in distinction' over their group[7] rivals by accumulating economic, social, cultural and educational 'capital'. He showed how groups gained their 'capital' (value, power and enjoyment) according to their ' schemes of perception and appreciation' (Bourdieu 1984, p. 20) and that these varied between different groups. These schemes of perception and appreciation imbued sport with properties viewed by contrasting groups as desirable or undesirable, valuable or worthless and, in some case, even virtuous or immoral. In twenty first century Scotland, fans (and citizens) accumulate capital by being anti-sectarian. For example, the clubs analysed (re)present their own club identity in direct opposition, to the Ulster / Loyalist Rangers and the Irish / Republican Celtic resulting in increasing levels of 'Scottishness' among the studied clubs. This 'Scottishness' appears to be replicated at international level also, with a perception that Celtic and

Rangers have few Scotland supporters and that a selection of other provincial Scottish clubs are over-represented.

While this research has not analysed whether or not Giulianotti (1991) was correct in predicting that a more autonomous Scotland would involve Scottish football identities abandoning their traditional 'cultural dislike' (p. 522) of the English, it does suggest he was correct to assert that Scottish football fans might seek more positive expressions of identity in which to express themselves to one another, to their own nation and beyond. England still represent the major sporting 'other' for many Scotland fans (Kelly 2007a,) but Giulianotti's assertion that some of Scotland's football fans are indeed intent on performing the role of "instrumental ambassadors", fostering 'ambassadorial bonhomie' in opposition to ' English' hooliganism seems well established. In the twenty first century this ambassadorial bonhomie now appears to be in opposition to Scottish sectarianism rather than English hooliganism. With the Old Firm increasingly being viewed as 'un-Scottish' or even 'anti-Scottish' by sections of Scotland's football public, the construction of the imagined Scottish football identity is bolstered by being anti-Old Firm in ways that being anti-English used to be for sections of Scotland's football fans. Football fans in Scotland now make gains in distinction by demonstrating their opposition to sectarianism and this occurs by downplaying previous linkages their own club had - as Hearts and Hibs have done with their historical sectarian links - by demonising the Old Firm, and by discursively framing Scottish football culture to be secular and free of religion. It is clear that for many Hibs, Hearts and Partick Thistle supporters, disassociating themselves from the sectarian Rangers and Celtic is a major contributor to accumulating symbolic capital. Although further research is desirable, it seems fair to acknowledge that for the Edinburgh-based supporters at least, space, place and class are contributory factors towards this antipathy towards Glasgow's Old Firm.

In a period marked by sustained political pressure to rid Scotland of sectarianism, the country's political and sporting authorities have adopted what appears to be an almost universally supported cause. Being anti-sectarian has come to represent a strongly valued good in social, cultural and political circles. Goffman's insights allow us to understand this further:

> When the individual presents himself (sic) before others, his performance will tend to incorporate and exemplify the officially accredited values of the society, more so, in fact, than does his behaviour as a whole. To the degree that a performance highlights the common official values of the society in which it occurs, we may look upon it ··· as an expressive rejuvenation and reaffirmation of the moral values of the community (Goffman, 1959, p. 45).

Sections of Partick Thistle, Hearts and Hibs fans ensure they distinguish themselves from the sectarian Old Firm. All three clubs seek to make gains in distinction by proving their non-sectarian credentials. Partick Thistle reinforce their underdog, Glaswegian status as a clear alternative to the Old Firm while the Edinburgh clubs seek to leave behind their respective residual sectarian identities (and rivalry) in favour of a modern Scottish rivalry based on football.

In Edinburgh, both the city and specific areas within the city were highlighted as important to the respective club identities expressed. Moreover, where these strong geographical attachments exist - with Hearts and Hibs - these clubs expressed strong levels of preference for their local sporting identity over their national (Scotland) sporting identity. This suggests that where geographical habitus attachments are strong this results in 'localised' identity superseding national identity. In analysing the significance of the local identity superseding any national identity, a further point of interest arises and is closely tied to the main themes to emerge from the football clubs. We can see that when fans express a stronger localised identity as opposed to national identity, those expressing these sentiments most strongly, (Hibs and Hearts) were also the main clubs to exhibit the strongest elements of support for their main city rival when in opposition to another inter-town / city rival. In other words, it appears that when a strong localised identity exists, not only does it supersede any national identification it also supersedes any local rivalry with major 'others', resulting in club supporters actively wishing their main rival to beat another less 'local' rival. If Scotland gains independence in the 2014 referendum, it seems likely that England will be supplanted by sectarianism as the football folk devil.

Conclusions

It might be suggested that the research presented in this article adds to an international body of knowledge. It contributes to the increasingly theoretically sophisticated research into football identities, avoiding the romanticised dichotomies of 'traditional' fan and 'consumer' fan that Dixon (2011) criticised. It re-examines the pre-devolution prediction by Giulianotti (1991) that if Scotland gained increasing levels of political autonomy Scottish national cultural (football) expressions would become more positive and possibly less England-centred. It suggests that both of these predictions are indeed accurate. Moreover, it is claimed that sectarianism and the connected Old Firm are supplanting England as the most obvious football folk devil to be challenged in the quest to present more positive national football identities in modern Scotland. The findings also corroborate Bradley's (2002, 2011) analyses which found religion was viewed as inappropriate and undesirable in Scottish football environments.

It also suggests that researchers working in this area need to be sensitive to the felt expressions of fans themselves, to listen to their voices. Future research should also consider the subtle impacts that increasing or sustained political autonomy and, the shifting political landscape, might have on football policy and fan culture. More specifically, studies on Scottish football in the context of the Offensive Behaviour at Football Bill and sectarianism must take care to analyse the extent to which Scotland's apparent increasing secularism and its anti-sectarian industry impact on religion in sport. Sectarianism, religion and the Old Firm are often simplistically conflated. Critical analyses should be careful to distinguish the three.

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Interviews:

Club / Interviewee	Date Time	Location	Duration
Portobello Hearts Supporters Club			
Andy 19 yrs	23/1/05 1.45pm	Hotel tea room on Princes Street, Edinburgh city centre	1 hour 8 minutes
Jim 38 yrs	23/1/05 7.30pm	Cairnie public house, Arbroath	I hour 49 minutes
Andrea 17 yrs	24/1/05 12 noon	Office in Livingstone retail park	35 minutes
Trevor 41 yrs	24/1/05 3.30pm 16/11/12 2pm	Edinburgh city centre public house City centre coffee shop, St James, Centre Edinburgh.	1 hour 2 minutes 50 minutes
Erin Hibernian Supporters Trust		Bell and Moon restaurant Edinburgh city centre	1 hour 25 minutes
Sarah 31 yrs	12/2/05 3.15pm		
Fred 66 yrs	13/2/05 1pm 12/5/12 4.30pm	The Four in Hand public house, Easter Road, Edinburgh As above	1 hour 6 minutes Group interview 1 hour 30 minutes
Jim 38 yrs	13/2/05 3.30pm 12/5/12 4.30pm	The Four in Hand public house, Easter Road, Edinburgh As above	1 hour 33 minutes Group interview 1 hour 30 minutes
Allan 27	14/2/05 2.15pm 12/5/12 4.30pm	Starbucks coffee shop, Princes Street Edinburgh	1 hour 31 minutes Group interview 1 hour 30 minutes
John 41 yrs	12/5/12 4.30pm	The Four in Hand public house, Easter Road, Edinburgh	Group interview 1 hour 30 minutes

Pablos Partick Thistle Supporters Club			
Dave 44 yrs	19/4/05 6pm	Pablos Public House, Jordanhill, Glasgow	1 hour 5 minutes
Pat 45 yrs	19/4/05 7.30pm	Pablos Public House, Jordanhill, Glasgow	1 hour 11 minutes
Steve 37 yrs	19/4/05 9pm	Pablos Public House, Jordanhill, Glasgow	1 hour 24 minutes
Ellen 32 yrs	20/4/05 6pm	Pablos Public House, Jordanhill, Glasgow	I hour 3 minutes
Fraser 22 yrs	7/7/12 2.30pm	Pablos Public House, Jordanhill, Glasgow	Group interview 1 hour 35 minutes
Craig 49 yrs	7/7/12 2.30pm	Pablos Public House, Jordanhill, Glasgow	Group interview 1 hour 35 minutes
Shona 46 yrs	7/7/12 2.30pm	Pablos Public House, Jordanhill, Glasgow	Group interview 1 hour 35 minutes
Tom 52 yrs	7/7/12 2.30pm	Pablos Public House, Jordanhill, Glasgow	Group interview 1 hour 35 minutes

Notes

[1] I use 'separation/independence' to acknowledge that while both words are used to describe the effects of Scotland no longer being part of the United Kingdom, they are loaded terms linked to polarized political positions regarding Scotland's relationship with the rest of the United Kingdom.

[2] Quotation marks are placed around sectarian to show that the term is not universally understood to mean the same thing in Scotland. Its common use in Scotland conflates ethnic and religious bigotry with ethnic and religious identity viewing both as undesirable sectarianism.

[3] All semi-structured interviews were with regular attending fans of each club. Most of them were season ticket holders and regular away game attendees.

[4] Scotland fans are often described as being members of the Tartan Army and both terms are used interchangeably.

[5] This is supported by Giulianotti (1994) and Bradley (2002).

[6] A common song referred to by most of the Hibs and Hearts respondents and sung by them towards Rangers and Celtic supporters is, 'In Yer Glasgow Slums', which represents a disparaging chant based on social class perceptions.

[7] Bourdieu referred to class fractions and much of his analysis was related to class. The fractions can be class based or based on wider sub-group factors, which in this case, involve class, location, attitude towards religion and sectarianism.

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